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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.[9]

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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[9] Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has
about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
431 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the
754 farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever
437 bought. As one of the islanders put it, "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only
[235] a few fowls since there is no way of selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the